

Integration of Madrassah (Indigenous Islamic Education System) Education with Formal Education System in Pakistan: Challenges and Opportunities

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“People don’t rebel because they are poor but because they are excluded from the system. To give people a stake in the economy, to prove to them that government is in the business of including them in formal society, is to put the terrorists out of business.”

Hernando de Soto (2000)

ABSTRACT:

Extremism remains the main concern for global security after 9/11 event. Western countries consider the religious intolerance in Muslim countries as a source of prevailing extremism. Pakistani Madaris (seminaries) are considered as a place for indoctrination of extremism and intolerance. The questions need to be addressed that why and how religious students tended towards extremism. The evidence shows that in Pukhtoon Society; the traditional social institutions of Hujra (Community center) and Jumaat (Mosque) relationship is also affected in post Afghan Soviet war. Hujra (Pukhtoon Community centre) which is traditionally the main supporter and financier of Jumaat (Mosque-religious institution); now seems to be overpowered by the religious institutions after getting trained and motivated organized Taliban (students of Indigenous Islamic Education System) and financial

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freedom after Afghan Soviet war. In this paper the question of legal status given to Taliban and their education status by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan is discussed. For exploring to answer this question both primary and secondary sources of data are used. The study concluded that no properly defined legal status exists for the millions of Taliban graduates in the state; and the aspired streamlining efforts of Madaris with formal education are non productive and ineffective. Even the supreme court of Pakistan is unanswered about the legal status of these graduates. Legislators elected in 2002 National Election faced cases in Supreme Court of Pakistan of their ineligibility based on the inequivalency of their Madaris Sanad (Degree) to the formal University Degree of Pakistan. Government of Pakistan tried to mainstream Madaris education with formal education system of Pakistan, through changing their curricula which is all time resisted by Madaris. It is concluded at the end of the study of integrating Madaris education with formal education system in vertical arrangement rather than in horizontal or lateral arrangement (change of curriculum and amalgamation of courses etc.). The approach of Vertical arrangement acknowledge the importance and value of both systems and provide benefits to the stakeholders in large. Different modalities are discussed in this paper.

Key words: Taliban, Pukhtoon, Vertical Integration, Madrassah, Terrorism

Introduction:

Madaris (Plural in Arabic Madaris or seminaries henceforth seminary will be called as Madrassah- singular or Madaris- plural) are pointed as source of global terror in the recent US war against terrorism in post 9/11 scenario and its graduates- Taliban are thought as Terrorists

(literally it means students, Singular of Taliban is Talib). This terminology is used since centuries but it gained popularity after take over of Kabul by the Taliban in early 90's and its alleged shelter to al Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden. After 9/11 US ranked Taliban and Al Qaeda as her Number One enemy and since then through US media the Pashto language word Taliban gets synonymous with terrorists. The question how much Madaris are involved in terrorism needs thorough assessment because in most cases; the numbers are exaggerated abnormally. There is perception in the western circles that Madaris in Pakistan are not only producing militants involved within Pakistan but are also exporting Jihadis into other regions besides this Madaris are also providing an ideological support to global terrorism. (Hippel, 2004)

But the state of Madaris in Pakistan studied by different authors; and explored a new world within state. For example Abdullah & Abdullah (2006) note in a study the condition of eye care in Madaris students; and reveal a fairly large neglected segment of society in Pakistan, and invite planners and policy makers of reaching to this wide range of community and suggest their integration in national health care reforms. The study further concluded that the strategic link between health care reforms should be linked with the question of social inclusion, resistance to change and forces of alienation in a conservative society such as that of NWFP.

The recent surge of a new phenomenon of *Talibanization* (western media use the term for Islamic radicalized indoctrination of society) shifted the attention towards the educational and curricula of the Madaris. It is believed that the curricula taught in Madaris indoctrinate the young students towards extremism and violence (Hippel, 2004).

There is general perception that entrants into Madaris are poor and more prone to fall into the trap of extremism but in fact there are many families who are financially sound and English educated, and they like to send their children to Madaris (Hippel, 2004). It is considered fair that spending early age in Madaris makes them better Muslims and this is a source of divine approval for parents. There is a general trend in Pakistan that some parents want to have Hafiz (memorizing by heart the text of Quran- Muslim religious book) first and after that parents enroll their children into formal education system. Besides there is a semi quasi-education system to formal education with different names like Iqra Rauzatul Atfal etc. throughout the country; there is an effort to bring both formal English based education and Islamic education into one system; where most of the upper and middle class families send their children. It is observed that, these types of Madaris cum English school are few and its popularity is not that much as centuries old based pure Islamic education system of *Madrassah* among the conservative and religious families; beside the acceptance and recognition of these schools as the only source of modern Islamic education system is remote.

Government of Pakistan efforts to mainstream and termed these efforts as "*Madrassah reformation*" while the religious clerics within country called it as conspiracy by western countries to reduce the effectiveness and make the body of *Madrassah* without Islamic spirit and the word "*Madrassah reformation*" is thought as a contempt to the centuries old institution.

Madaris are not seemed ready to adopt the modern curricula into the folds of their traditional theological subjects. There are five systems which are represented by the *Madrassah* board i.e. *Wafaqul Madaris*;

categorically refuse at all levels any reformation efforts (ICG Report, 2004).

Background:

United States has identified Al Qaeda as the main perpetrator of global terrorism and pointing to Pakistan as the hub of all the terror activities. In January 2007, the Director of National Intelligence¹, before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence recorded the statement of the problems facing with Pakistan by American policymakers which is:

Pakistan is a frontline partner in the war on terror.

Nevertheless, it remains a major source of Islamic extremism and the home for some top terrorist leaders ...

(Commenting about Al-Qaeda) Organization's Core elements ... maintain active connections and relationships that radiate outward from their leaders' secure hideouts in Pakistan.

Generally Madaris are thought as a place from where all terror activities are generated in post 9/11 scenario. There is a perception in west that Muslims join Al Qaeda unintentionally at first level when radical Imam of a mosque uses passionate religious rhetoric that Islam is a total system, and offers solution to every problem, but that all miseries on Muslims are because of the conspiracies hatched by Jews and Christians to disallow the rise of Muslim Ummah² (Emerson, 2003)

The general view, about Madrassah as the place where different harms were experienced by the students. In the International Crisis Group Report (2004) it is noted that the problems associated with Madrassah are because of its problematic, obsolete and violence provoking curricula. There is a reason that these Madrassah are

producing self-styled believers as referred by many (Hippel, 2004; Stern, 2001). Other than the steps taken by the government of Pakistan – including its purported ban on different terrorist organizations, despite that, these are operating openly with a high measure of freedom in and from Pakistan (ICG Report, 2004). Besides, the process of Islamist radicalization continues apace both through Madrassah (seminary) and the school education system, and none of General Musharraf government and successive government efforts reached effective fruition (Sahni, 2004).

The students attending radicalized Madrassah are influenced to have become apparent; however, but it is noted that children who attend certain radicalized Madrassah are taught of hating West, very from early age and no attention is paid to their practical skills (Stern, 2001).

The subject of Madrassah and terrorism connection brought into limelight after 9/11. The 9/11 commission report (2004) highlighted the linkage between the Madaris and the issue of international terrorism, the report recommended that US government should provide support to Pakistan in improving the quality of education it offers to the youngsters in all circles of formal and informal education sector.

The efforts of streamlining Madaris education is recognized globally and to have a Madrassah curriculum compatible with modern education system for this purpose for example European Union is keen to evolve a more suitable alternative Madrassah Education system in Pakistan (Smith, 2002). There are certain allegations by many international human rights organization of child violence in Pakistani Madaris. Amnesty International (1998) noted that children of the ages of 8-14 are chained for up to one year; while the Madaris manager stated

that parents leave their children for moral reformation for example they got the habits of watching satellite television.

US government and other developed countries pressurized Pakistan for streamlining Madrassah education system and its reformation; but resulted in minimal success.³ The courses taught in Pakistani Madaris varies with the specialization but the general course period covers 8 years and the core subjects include explanation of Qu'ran, Hadith, Islamic Jurisprudence, Principles of Jurisprudence, philosophy, Arabic literature and poetry, principles of religious belief, inheritance and logic. At the end of the eighth year after passing the required examination the student is encourage to write a thesis. And after successful completion of the curriculum and other requirements; degree of Shahadat Ul Alamia is awarded, which is equivalent to MA Arabic or Islamic studies and recognized by Higher Education Commission of Pakistan.

Hippil (2004) notes that the efforts to streamline Madrassah education system are quite successful in countries like Qatar where ruler Shiekh Hamad Bin Khalifa Thani introduced these reforms but there are still millions of Madrassah graduates produced having extremist tendency in countries like Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Indonesia are examples of those cases and parts of Africa as well as the Middle East and North Africa; but not all schools have an extremist agenda and most of them are working purely providing religious education.

On 14 November 2003, Pakistan leading English Newspaper *The News* reports the US Ambassador to Pakistan Nancy Powell quoted that

Her government was alarmed by the rising resurgence of outlawed Islamist terrorist groups in Pakistan; operating

openly under new names and with the same leaders. These groups, she said," pose a serious threat to Pakistan, to the region and to US.

▪ **Historical perspective of Madrassah education**

Historically there is no evidence of religious institutions like Madrassah in the period of Prophet Mohammad although Prophet PBUH organized sessions for the education of Muslims known as As-haabe Suffah. Although the teaching of Prophet Mohammad PBUH emphasize the acquisition of education both for man and woman. At an occasion when Prisoners of war were brought in a Ghazawah Badar (war in which the holy prophet participated and led Muslim army) to the holy Prophet PBUH; he linked the freedom of educated non Muslims POW to educating Muslims as Jizia (price of freedom). So the discussion that whether knowledge is a secular subject or it must be related by one way or another with Islamic teaching needs further discussion. Historically the oldest Madrassah in the Muslim world was traced as Jami'at al Qaraviyen in 859 in the city of Fez founded by Fatima Al Fihri (Wikipedia, 2009). Later on during the Abbasid period the Seljuk Vizeer Nizam Al Mulk established a system of state Madrassah called after his name as Nizamiyyah. The establishment of Madaris was founded through the religious endowment called waqf (Wikipedia, 2009).

The course of Madrassah usually offers hifz (memorization of Quran) course and Alim course producing Hafiz (a person who memorizes Quran) and a scholar of Islamic traditions and knowledge. Alim course include Tafsir- Quranic interpretation, Shariah- Islamic code of life including conclusive Islamic law, Hadith- the sayings and

deeds of Prophet Mohammad, Logic and Arabic grammar (Andrabi, Das, Khwaja & Zajonc, 2005; Mujahid-Mukhtar, 2005)

But some criticism is being made on the rigidity of the Madaris courses for example Professor Nazeer Ahmed⁴ (Member Islamic Research Foundation International, Inc.) has given very interesting comments about Madrassah in Islamic society. He quoted as:

There is a one-to-one correspondence between the educational system and the archetypes that a civilization produces. These archetypes capture the functional aspirations of a society much as architecture captures its spiritual longings. The archetype in modern-day America is Bill Gates. In nineteenth century England it was the merchant. In classical Japan it was the Samurai. Each archetype personifies what a civilization is and what it wants to become. One of the difficulties in formulating a consistent educational reformation of the Madrassah is that there is no single archetype that captures the essence of Islamic civilization today. Modern-day Muslims live in different ages. Some live in the seventh century, some in the age of the Crusades, some in the age of the Taj Mahal, and some in dreamland. The resulting confusion is all too apparent.

Dr Nazeer Ahmad identified seven such archetypes during fourteen hundred Islamic history after hijra.

In Pakistan Madaris gained popularity and strength in terms of attendance in the period of Military ruler General Zia; in order to oblige Americans in fighting Soviet forces he vehemently adopted Islamization

and in this garb promoted Madrassah education in Pakistan (Sahni, 2008). He established links between Madaris and donors and that's how he propped Jihadis for Afghan war during 1980s (Sahni, 2008).

▪ **Statistical information about Madrassah Education**

According to Pakistan's National Education Census there are 12000 Madrassah throughout the country ⁵; and are sprawling with every passing day. But the total number of Madrassah may exceed 30000 if unregistered Madrassah are also included. The number of students studying in these Madaris exceeds 1,065,277 students (Mujahid-Mukhtar, 2005).

There was remarkable increase in number of Madaris since independence in 1947; total number of Madaris in Pakistan at the time of independence was 247 which increased to 6700 in year 2000. Total number of Madrassah in Pakistan are claimed from 25000 to 55000 (Rashid, 2000; Singer, 2001; Stern, 2000). The causes of increase in the number of Madaris after 9/11 are numerous.

The number of Madaris province wise is as under:

Province	1947	1960	1980	1988	2000
Punjab	121	195	1012	1320	3153
Sindh	21	87	380	291	905
NWFP	59	87	426	678	1281
Balochistan	28	70	135	347	692
AJ & K	4	8	29	76	151
ICT	0	1	27	47	94
Northern Areas	12	16	47	102	185

Province	1947	1960	1980	1988	2000
FATA					300
Total	245	464	2056	2861	6761

Source: *Pakistan: Religious Education Institutions- An Overview*; Institute of Policy Studies; Islamabad; 2002

There is an increase in number of students both girls (61%) and boys (111%) from 1988 to 2000. The number of students in different levels in Madaris is as under:

	1988		2000	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Nazra	228,317	67,773	510,125	101,040
Hifz	84,953	6,271	190,105	14,125
Tajvidh	42,276	3,443	75,105	7,910
Tehtani	58,027	1,748	108,202	4,106
Moqul-Alaih	15,724	639	28,210	1,504
Dora-e-Hadith	12,260	1,585	22,125	2,720
Total	441,557	81,459	933,872	131,405

Source: *Pakistan: Religious Education Institution- An Overview*; Institute of Policy Studies; Islamabad; 2002.

Madrassah Education role in society and its extralegal status: two worlds within one state

Religious education has been a source of not only religious doctrine preservation but also produced people who are regarded in high esteem throughout history across different religion for their explanation of religious belief and spirituality. There are certain examples of Saints,

Sufis (Muslim spiritual personalities) who are regarded in more than one religion; Ajmeer Shareef in India is an example of a Muslim Saint revered both Muslim and Hindu sects. Adoption, practice and education of religious practices are the basic human rights accepted in all religion and legal system. There are always movements worldwide to become more religiously indoctrinated education system for example according to Rev. Jerry Falwell openly calling for the end of public schools.

I hope I live to see the day when, as in the early days of our country, we won't have any public schools..... and the churches will have taken them over again and Christians will be running them. What a happy day that will be!⁶

Like the movements worldwide advocating for more religious education, as in the words of Falwell for taking over of all schools by Churches; the proponents of the same philosophy stemmed in conservative Islamic society after the decline of Islamic Khilafat of Turkey in post World War I. And consequently in global affairs; it leads to more Islamic tradition preserving approach to the powerful modern materialistic western thoughts with socioeconomic and governance doctrines.

During the British colonial period Indian Muslims were deprived of not only their empire but also English favored more the dominant and majority Hindu population. This trend frightened Muslim clerics during that period to conserve their beliefs and religion from the threat; one is from the presumed English educated majority local Hindu religious influence and with the same, rising of scientific-cum-industrial British colonial government onslaught on Muslim centuries old traditions. There was another movement for educating Muslim youth with modern English

system. The former finally culminated into Deobandi⁷ movements- of which the recent majority Madaris in Pakistan belonged while the latter ended with Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan Ali-Garh University movement – a beam for the enlightened population of learning modern sciences and literature, graduates of this university were the fore bearer of Independence during 1947 against British Colonial government finally culminating in shape of Pakistan while the Deobandi movement were against division of India and looking for a greater victory within India and renaissance of the Muslim Indian Khilafat.

There were people at all stages during the period to unite and streamline both Deobandi movement and Ali-Garh movement; but both groups were strongly held up at their positions and still the streams are separated although running parallel.

With the passage of time the formal English educated youth emerged as the elite class and held the power steering in Pakistani society while the Madaris graduates tend to have a world based in resource less poverty stricken society only working as prayer leaders. This created a state with two worlds; based on two different ideologies.

There are million graduates of Madaris presently in Pakistan but their official status is unrecognized and they are living in world where they are only recognized by its peers and some sympathetic segments in society.

The words of Peruvian socio economist Hernando De Soto of “Extralegal world” (Soto, 2000) will be more suited to explain this their world, I came across a Teacher in a seminary; he complained that although he studied more than sixteen years of education in different Madaris and traveled a lot to learn more about the Islamic history,

Arabic grammar and other religious education but he is still regarded in official record of NADRA (ID cards and passport issuing authority) as illiterate.

Courses of Action

- **Strategies in mainstreaming of Madrassah education**
 - **Model Madrassah and Deeni Madaris (Voluntary Registration and Regulation) Ordinance**

There exists a huge gulf between the government and Madrassah managers themselves; they by no means going to accept any interference in Madrassah affairs. They boast as performing a job for sacred purpose; therefore any interference at any level is assumed as an effort to divert and frustrate the purpose of Madrassah and is considered as a part of foreign agenda- dictated by the enemies of Islam. After interviewing many Madrassah Mohtamims (Managers) they have their own wisdom behind not accepting any effort like reforms. They consider the word Reform as derogatory to their system. According to them medical colleges produce doctors; engineering universities produce engineers and law colleges produce lawyers therefore madrassahs producing Islamic scholars (ICG Report, 2004). If Madrassah managers asked a medical college or business school or law college to reform according to the Madrassah code that will be injustice and will be taken as an offensive then how a system established since centuries should be reformed. Madaris managers argued that there is no need for the registration of Madaris because they are registered under Society Act 1860 an act, which is also validated within the circle of government.

In order to regulate Madaris education; on 18 August 2001 Pakistan former military ruler General Musharraf promulgated an

ordinance to institute Pakistan Madrassah Education Board under the chairmanship of SM Zaman, the head of top religious constitutional body of Pakistan Ideology Council responsible for advising government about bringing existing laws according to the Islamic injunctions. PMEB is also empowered to grant affiliation to existing Madaris. The spirit behind the process is to introduce both secular and religious education to the existing set of Madrassah only 499 Madaris applied for registration (ICG Report, 2004).

On 20 June 2002 cabinet approved a draft law for registration and financial regulation of Madaris. The Madrassah ordinance allows voluntary registration rather than mandatory. This ordinance not only restricts admission of foreign student without presenting NOC from Ministry of Interior affairs; and appointment of foreign teachers but also puts restriction on funding, grants and donations. After the cabinet approval General Musharraf declined to sign such ordinance after meeting and discussing ordinance with Wafaq Ul Madaris (Board of religious schools) Managers (ICG Report, 2004). Wafaq Ul Madaris reacted to oppose such move; and asked members Madaris of not obliging any registration under the said ordinance. Government allocated US \$204 millions to spend within five years under the Madrassah Reform Program (ICG Report, 2004). MRP follows the government's education policy to ensure as provided by constitution and to evolve an integrated education system by narrowing gap between the curriculum of Madaris and the modern formal education system to ensure equal access of all citizens to the opportunities.

- **Legal status of Madaris graduates**

The dilemma of the Madrassah education system in Pakistan is that

it has no formal recognition in legal and formal state system. There exists no job structure except induction in government primary and high school as theology teacher coupled with no promotion chances. During Zia regime in 80's the degree of the Madaris was declared equivalent to Master in theology provided that they pass Bachelor level English course. The opportunities, which exist for Madrassah graduates, are minimal except becoming Prayer leaders or going back to their informal education system by establishing another new Madrassah with the help of their donors usually class mate from gulf or an acquaintance to a potential donor and sympathizers. The reason of mushrooming Madrassahs in Pakistan is their informal status in legal system, which pushes their graduates to absorb back into their extralegal world and further enhancing the affair.

Analysis:

- **Efforts of horizontal integration of religious education with formal education system**

Governments' efforts were always directed towards *horizontal or lateral integration* of Madaris.

The use of the term Horizontal Integration means integration of both educational systems in one single system; the Madrassah Education system and Formal Education system-which is accepted in Pakistan. The government stance always revolve around that the legality will be provided only to the Madaris when they accept what is being offered by government in shape of the courses taught in formal education system in Pakistan in particular, with the courses taught traditionally in Madaris. Hence Horizontally integrating the Madrassah Education system with the formal education system in Pakistan.

Government tried to change their curriculum through offering different incentives to the seminaries. These offerings include provision of computers, books, and training of teachers according to the new curriculum. Here the question arises that after such long history of resistance with tooth and nail by the seminary administrator to these so-called reforms, how can they accept such an offer? They saw generally a foreign agenda behind any move, which deprives Madaris of its own course of studies and consequently attacking the real spirit of Islam. If government of Pakistan remains stuck with its guns and Madaris hold its position the outcome will be disastrous and will be result in distancing more the two worlds.

Channelization of Madrassah education through “Vertical integration” with formal education system: another view

There is need of debate that how Madrassah curricula is not qualifying to be recognized at par with formal education and knowledge providing body. The mode of education in Madrassah is Arabic and most of the books taught are written by eminent scholars in Arabic linguistics and Islamic history. If the courses taught in Madaris are viewed from another perspective. In most of the Arab world the medium of instruction in schools, colleges and even universities is in Arabic. They have invented their own names in Arabic for day-to-day items like mobile, television, satellite, and even every modern invention even the softwares in Arabic language, are in use in gulf and Arab world. If a person understands business law or history or linguistics although he learned it through Arabic language he must not be considered as illiterate. Therefore the level of illiteracy could not be linked to the medium of language but to the knowledge he learned and his capacity of learning.

English literacy created a perception in the minds of the former centuries ruled English colonized population in Pakistan as a status symbol. While in rest of the world the meaning of literacy interpreted differently. This thinking infested every socio legal segment in Pakistan. For example National testing system NTS conduct GRE type tests for students in order to get admission in higher degree courses like MPhil and PhD in Pakistan. Ironically passing English test is must for the student aspiring to get admission in M.Phil Urdu, Islamic studies and other non-English languages. This approach changed the whole education scenario in Pakistan. The English language centered thinking not only impedes progress of higher education in Pakistan but its main victims are Madaris graduates whose medium of instruction is in Arabic, Persian or Urdu.

There is a non-governmental report (International Crisis Group Report, 2004), which inferred Urdu medium Education in public sector education as a cause for prevalence of extremist attitude in Pakistani society. It is quoted that Pakistan own national agenda on Kashmir and Afghanistan pushed Pakistani education policymakers to adopt such curricula for the education to produce a more Islamized and Jihadis lot out of their public schools. This argument seems apparently understandable but it looses ground when it is looked that when and how militancy is promoted into Pakistani society. Jihad was globalized and sanctified by the US itself during Afghan soviet war era. The Jihadis were mainly recruited from the poor segments of the society and thus turned Tribal and Pukhtun belt into a war industry zone. So the argument that Urdu medium instruction is a cause for extremism is baseless as the ideology of war against infidels became popular during 1979-1988 and Urdu medium of instruction was present even before the partition and British Raj (used

for the British Colonial Period in undivided India, pre 1947 era). This would be an interesting note that William Fort College was the first ever Urdu college in Indian subcontinent established by the British since centuries back.

Traditionally in Mughal India Persian language was medium of instruction in educational institutes before colonization by British Raj in late Eighteenth Century. Persian was spoken by the elites and was thought as a sign of knowledge and respect in Indian societies. When Madaris like Deoband etc. were established, Persian and Arabic were the medium of instructions. The founder of these institutes were least affected and impressed by the ruling English elites and the instructions of Madaris were kept Persian and Arabic in accordance to the centuries old tradition of Indian Muslims. With the rise of the new Muslim elite English educated class these Madaris graduates were marginalized. Although certain Muslim Scholars and clerics like Obaidullah Sindhi stressed for learning the Modern western thoughts and languages (Amjad, 2010). Interestingly in Pakistan, there is no chance for Madrassah graduate to get government employment and appeared in competitive examination although most of them are expert and scholar in Arabic and Persian linguistics, Urdu language, comparative religion, and world history beside religious knowledge. As the efforts to allow Madaris graduate into formal education by recognizing their mode of education and encouraging them to study in different fields of education is minimal and there is no support available to allow Madaris graduate to further study and to integrate their education with formal colleges and universities.

The effort of streamlining of Madaris education is restricted to

the horizontal or lateral integration; there is another aspect of integrating Madaris education with formal education through *vertical integration*

▪ **“The Vertical Integration” The Term redefined**

With the view of the Horizontal Integration; there is another option available of *Vertical Integration*- it is the product of an “Out of the Box Thinking”. Here for this term, I wish to use the words of Peruvian socio economist Hernando De Soto “Life outside the Bell Jar” (Soto, 2000). *Vertical Integration* of the Madrassah Education with the formal education system means “Recognition of the Madrassah Education wholeheartedly and allowing the graduates to fully participate in formal socio-economic activities of state recognizing the strengths of their systems”. An example can well illustrate the term, if a graduate of Madrassah system wants to join a Medical College or an Engineering University or want to study the formal Law of the state- he or she must be allowed to join any formal system based professional education. Or if some Madrassah graduate wants to join the civil service of Pakistan, the competitive examination for the said service must be designed in such a way to allow the Madrassah Graduate to participate in the competition with his/her full potential. It might come in shape of inclusion of Urdu, Arabic, Persian languages in compulsory subjects with the option of presently only English language for the evaluation of comprehension and writing skills of the candidates. The eligibility of the Madrassah Graduate should not be looked the formal completion of certain courses but should be evaluated over his competence and potential for learning. The mode for such integration must be decided by the expert based on subject to subject but care should be taken in account for the integrity of the education of Madrassah based system. So the graduates of Madaris

must be accepted as *vertically integrating* their education system with the formal education and administrative setup of Pakistan.

The Actions to be taken:

Vertical integration will bring sense of respect and coaxed Madaris graduates to streamline with formal education system in Pakistan. There is need of reformation at the side of government rather reformation in Madrasah education system. This will bring the intelligent poor lot into mainstream but also give a sense of pride to the downtrodden rejected lot. An evolutionary method (vertical integration) must be adopted rather than a revolutionary (horizontal integration). The mainstreaming of education systems taught in Pakistan could not be achieved overnight, but a planned and systematic approach would integrate the systems. The acceptance of Madrasah graduate in formal sector of Pakistan will provide input to their Madaris of academic feedback for the required updation or change in the taught courses in Madaris, the said feedback mechanism is non-existent at this moment. The approach adopted by the British towards Madaris in their Colonial era; made the Indigenous Islamic Education System or Madaris very defensive and their attitudes remain the same since passage of a more or less than a century.

Vertical integration in long run would coordinate Madrasah education with formal education system while *horizontal integration* would bring clash in society and further divide both system of education.

Recommendation :

Government should take into account the “indifferent attitude since centuries” to this segment of society and should develop policies in such a way that integrate all segments without any indiscrimination. This

streamlining effort must be based on realism and should be viewed in context of historical window. Pakistan must respect and perform its constitutional obligations providing equal opportunities to its entire citizenry.

The agenda for *Madrassah* mainstreaming should be “integration” rather than a derogatory word like “reformation”. The right that every individual is free to seek education in any sphere of knowledge and that right must be respected. And therefore the status of *Madrassah* education must be recognized. Once this informal mode of education is brought into the formal sector. Then an evolutionary process would start itself. Through evolutionary process when it becomes inevitable to the non formal sector education like *Madrassah* education to live in a global world without learning International language English, understanding and using computer and programming languages, mathematics and some other worldly subjects. Converting all of the sudden century's old religiously indoctrinated system into a modern worldly education system without giving ideological background except modernization would be futile. The passage of a parliamentary bill or a presidential ordinance could not change and affect *Madaris* education. It needs an understanding and primarily an integration strategy should be adopted. After integration effort this non-formal education system would itself drift towards adaptation according to the societal needs. Primarily different government agencies should concentrate on integration. Agencies like ministry of education, Higher education commission, Federal Public Service Commission, non-governmental organization etc should be encouraged that after completion of *Madrassah* education how their education would be recognized and acknowledged. Yet to date

HEC has not recognized its role in Madaris education and its integration with higher education. HEC can be the most effective institution for achieving so.

The followings are few recommendations through which religious seminaries can be integrated with the formal education in Pakistan.

1. Government must devise different projects and programs through its agencies like Higher Education Commission or ministry of Education through which Graduates from Madaris are encouraged to get admission in different graduate programs in formal education systems. For achieving this end; the Madaris graduates must be passed through one year sandwich or foundation course. Courses like English, Pakistan study, and basic science and general knowledge with an option of Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Mathematics must be taught in order to get Madaris graduates enrolled in social sciences, humanities, Medical and engineering programs in different universities based on the choice of the Madrassah graduate.
2. Majority of Madaris graduates belong to poor families and affordability of education at university level is near to impossible; they must be granted different scholarships at different level.
3. At the end of each sandwich course a GRE type of exam may be given and the qualified student must be honored with certificates which may qualify them to get admission in any university in Pakistan.
4. There must be kept a certain quota for Madaris graduate at all universities in Pakistan; and government must bear all their

expenses along with living scholarships.

5. Quota must be allocated in all government jobs for the Madaris graduates who have successfully passed through university education system who availed government scheme.
6. Besides this, Public service commissions should change their recruitment criteria from emphasizing on English language onto emphasis on competency and knowledge. Later on after selection the candidates may be passed through learning English language and other administrative or required skills. Therefore the list of medium for evaluation of compulsory language may be changed into opting for Urdu, Arabic, and Persian besides English language.
7. There is a need of paradigm shift, and this would encourage non-formal education sector to integrate and evolve their educational curricula with national and international obligations and requirements.

Conclusion:

Taliban or Madaris graduates are the product of a system, which is not recognized and integrated into the formal education system. The integration of Madaris education with formal education is a matter of prime importance. As the graduate of these Madaris has no place in state formal system tended to create their own world and join the extralegal sector and joining of militias may not be excluded in this regard. Beside attractive incentives must be offered to those Madaris graduates and serious attention must be given to encourage them for their vertical integration into formal education system of Pakistan. This effort will not only help to eliminate the conflict between Deobandi and Aligarh

ideologies but also opens the legal and formal world door to those extralegal sons of the republic who are languishing in the prison of their ideologies and egos.

A final word:

Taliban are not the part of problem but rather they are the victims of the generally perceived solution.

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- ¹ Statement before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Jan. 11, 2007, At : <http://intelligence.senate.gov/hearings.cfm?hearingId=2467>
- ² The word Muslim Ummah is used as a metaphorical interpretation for Muslim as a single Nation with common socio-economic goals.
- ³ In 2002 USAID committed of providing \$100 million for the five years period to reform education in Pakistan.
- ⁴ Professor Nazeer Ahmad Member Islamic Research Foundation International Inc. The article found on www.irfi.org dated 17th June 2008
- ⁵ The News (Islamabad), Oct. 12, 2006.
- ⁶ Quoting the words of Rev. Jerry Falwell (America Can Be Saved, Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1979), The State of the Religious Right- 2006, The Anatomy of Power Found on www.tfn.org dated 24 April 2009
- ⁷ Deoband is situated in Uttar Pradesh India, and played a leading role in Islamic movements before and after partition in 1947.

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